

“we value our own lives more than money.” It is only a few of the more daring spirits among them who, knowing the *òding*, *i. e.* the secret by which they can disarm it of its dreaded power, have the courage to attempt its capture. Occasionally it is brought to Tamatave for sale, where it realizes a good sum. Now and then it is accidentally caught in the traps which the natives set for Lemurs; but the owner of the trap, unless one of those versed in the Aye-aye mysteries, who knows the charm by which to counteract its evil power, smears fat over it, thus securing its forgiveness and goodwill, and then sets it free. The story goes that occasionally when a person sleeps in the forest the Aye-aye brings a pillow for him: if a pillow for the head, the person will become rich; if for the feet, he will shortly succumb to the creature’s fatal power, or at least will become bewitched. Such is the account the natives give of the curious *Chiromys madagascariensis*.

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3. On the Natural Position of the Family *Dipodidæ*.

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Since Mr. G. R. Waterhouse, in 1839, proposed what may be with justice termed the first approach to a natural arrangement of the families of Rodentia, other systems of classification, down to that of Alston in 1876, have from time to time appeared. In all, however, the family *Dipodidæ* has been placed either next the *Muridæ*, or in the same group with them, being separated from the hystricine rodents evidently mainly on account of the united condition of the tibia and fibula, but possibly also by some of the older zoologists on account of the superficial resemblance borne by one of the species at least to the true Mice. The object of this communication is to show that the position hitherto assigned to these rodents cannot be maintained on natural grounds.

Lately, while investigating the various modes of arrangement of the long flexor muscles of the feet of Mammalia, I was struck by the fact that the species of *Dipodidæ* agreed altogether in the united condition of the tendons of these muscles with the hystricine rodents, and not with the *Myomorpha*, in which group they have hitherto been placed. The importance of this character, which I have elsewhere¹ fully demonstrated, led me to carefully inquire into the value of the so-called murine affinities of the *Dipodidæ*, with the result that these may be said to consist only in the united condition of the leg-bones. On the other hand, all the lead-

¹ In a paper, “On the Homologies of the Long Flexor Muscles of the Feet of Mammalia,” read before the Biological Section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science at Southampton, in August last, and subsequently published in the ‘Journal of Anatomy and Physiology,’ vol. xvii. (1882-83).

